

Dacnis, I

(1)

November 29, 1957  
Panama Colocoto

~~DAWN~~ = Blue Dacnis = Cyanerpes

This species has not been conspicuous around the clearing on the island but there is at least one ♂ in the neighborhood.

It came once, with a bunch of ♂ Guavapes, to "visit" the captive birds. Didn't do much. Just sat, guava occasional call-note "Tut", and made a few weak WF and TF movements of the usual tanager type.

This bird seemed to be definitely, but loosely, associated with the flock of ♂ Guavapes; it usually flew around with them, but not by any means always.

Aside from this incident, I have only seen the ♂ Dacnis feeding by itself high in the tree-tops.

Dacnis, II

December 22, 1957,  
Panama Colocoto

~~DAWN~~ = Scarlet-thighed Dacnis = menusta

A ♂ of this species, in full plumage, came and "visited" the birds in the aviary this morning.

Just sat, with lots of TF, some WF, and uttered lots of "Tut" Notes (quite loudly perhaps less so than those of the Green Honeycreeper). Then flew off silently. I.E. the circumstances of these "Tut" Notes were quite reminiscent of those of the

Dacnis, Dec. 22, 1957, I.

(2)

Green Honeycreeper - rather like alarm notes.

Dacnis, I

December 25, 1957

Rio Chagres

I watched some of these birds in the tree-tops along the river, near the Trans-isthmian highway; and noted that they seemed to move as a flock (probably including 4 or 5 birds). Also probably loosely associated with a flock of Plain Tanagers!

Dacnis, I

January 15, 1958

Bario Colorado

I have seen quite a few of both species around here - single males, or (in the case of the Blue Dacnis) pairs. Very restless, never staying in one tree for very long; and never showing any display of any sort. Often in trees with Plain Tanagers and associated species, but never really integrated in flock - or, at least, often leave before the tanagers do.

Dacnis, I

January 31, 1958

Bario Colorado

I saw 3 Blue Dacnis (1 adult ♂, another ♂, probably immature, and 1 ♀) associating with one another today. The largest 'flock' I have seen so far. When first watched, they were resting and preening.

Dacus, Jan 31, 1958, I

(3)

in the same tree as a flock of Blue Honeycreepers (who were doing the same things). But the birds eventually moved on and began to feed, and the 2 species seemed to segregate completely.

Dacus, I

February 4, 1958  
Bast Colorado

I have seen several more Scarlet-tailed from time to time (including this morning), always in pairs apparently, generally very reminiscent of Blue Honeycreepers in feeding & flying movements (and their TF's and WF's seem to be identical); but they absolutely do not associate with any of the Honeycreepers (or the Blue Dacnis as far as I have seen) at all.

Also watching an apparently single ♀ Blue Dacnis this evening. Uttering single CN's repeatedly, at a few second intervals. The posture from which she gave these CN's was approximately as follows:

Tail slightly but definitely lowered with each note, and then raised back to previous position

(I wouldn't  
pay too much



attention to the fluffing of this posture. After the terrific rain storm last night, all the birds seem to be more fluffed than usual). The CN's themselves could certainly be transcribed as "Tsit", as I have done before; and they are certainly reminiscent of the CN's of the Green Honeycreeper (if definitely weaker); but they also have a very faint trace of the "husky" quality of the Blue Honeycreeper's HCN's (although I do not think that

Dacnis, Feb 4, 1958, II.

(4)

they are strictly homologous with the Blue Honeycreepers HCN's — more likely its ordinary "CN's")

The circumstances in which these notes were given were not awfully clear. When I first saw the bird, a nearby group of Blue Honeycreepers were uttering a lot of HCN's, and the Dacnis almost seemed to be duetting with the Honeycreepers; but it continued its notes after the Honeycreepers had shut up. This bird did not seem to be alarmed or hostile to any appreciable extent, so these notes did not seem to function exactly like the "first" Notes of the Green Honeycreepers. I rather wondered, in fact, if this ♀ was not trying to "call in" her ♂?

Dacnis, I

February 4, 1958  
Barro Colorado

A single ♂ Scarlet-thigh came to the dead tree by Chapman House this afternoon and gave a lot of notes, apparently some sort of CN's. Without any ritualized postures or movements. The notes themselves were longer than any I remember hearing from Dacnis before, almost syllable-like. Usually more or less like "Tsee-ee"; perhaps sometimes like "freee-you" — Rattle! plaintive. These were perhaps most reminiscent of some of the plaintive CN's of the Thraupis tanagers — the ones that I think we used to "call in" the mate. Anyhow they produced no response in the case of this Scarlet-thigh and he eventually flew off and disappeared.

Dacnis, I

March 7, 1958,  
Barro Colorado

Looked up into a tree-top to find what seemed to be a dispute in progress between 2 ♂ Blue Dacnis. The 2 birds were flitting around from twig to twig, posturing briefly between flights. It was very noticeable that they didn't do any fluffing of any kind during this performance!!! The postures between flights were a form of St. Thou or less common. I only caught a brief glimpse of this performance, but any sound or any fluffing was certainly no fluff! It was noticeable that a bird always tended to face its opponent, i.e. showing off the black throat, as in the ♂ flaming Honeycreeper.



It was very impressive that the bird tended to go into the St with a comparatively rapid & vigorous movement so that the whole thing almost looked like a form of Head-tossing. Could this possibly be related to the "Courtship" of the Swallow-tanager described by Schaefer ???

Dacnis, I

June 22, 1958,  
Barro Colorado

Watching a dispute, apparently between a ♂ Blue Dacnis (with less of uttering screech, nearly) and a ♂ Green Honeycreeper. The ♂ Dacnis repeatedly alternated a St Posture, like the one

Dawson, June 18, 1958, It

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when the birds all flew away quite suddenly.

Davis, I

April 26, 1960

*Dario Coicula*

I bought a pair of Blue Dacuses (1 ♂ & 1 ♀) in the market  
yesterday. I now have them in a 3-foot cage, by themselves, in the  
animal house. They appear to be in quite good health (the ♂ has lost  
his tail but is very vigorous. The ♀ is in nearly perfect plumage but not  
quite so bright).

One or both birds (possibly only the ♂) utter single "Tut" (N's) from time to time. Quite soft and weak-sounding. Not at all harsh or coarse or metallic. Not accompanied by any special ritualized postures or movements.

At dawn this morning the ♂ uttered 3 separate, single, phrases of "warbling" song. Very jumbled and difficult to hear clearly — although not really very soft. The last part of each phrase seemed to be a doublet. Perhaps something like "Tsee-weee"? It is possible that the rest of the phrases were also doublets, although less distinct. Probably something like 6 or 7 notes in each phrase. As far as I could tell, none of these songs were accompanied by stylized postures or movements.

Dacnis, Apr. 26, 1960, II

(7)

This ♂ seems to be in completely adult plumage. His utterance of a warbling song is, therefore, rather surprising. Is this species more "primitve" than Cyanerpes - Chlorophanes??

I shouldn't be surprised if this turned out to be another comparatively strong, hostile species. I notice that this ♂ and ♀ always or almost always feed separately. The ♂ usually goes down to the food dish a eats, while the ♀ remains upon a perch. Then, when the ♂ has finished and leaves the food dish, the ♀ goes down and eats.

The ♂ has spent a lot of time hopping or "creeping" up and down the wire-netting sides of his cage, apparently looking for insects. This species may be more of a "creper" than the other tanager-honeycreepers.

Dacnis, I.

April 27, 1960

Bajo Colorado

I watched my captive pair of Blue Dacnis (which I shall call pair "A") this morning, in their small separate cage. Nothing at all interesting. So then I put them down in a large outside cage, 30 ft long, with 3 ♂ and 3 ♀ Red-legged Blue Honeycreepers.

When these A Dacnis were put in the new cage, they provoked a little hostility from the Honeycreepers (see today's notes on Cyanerpes). Both the ♂ and the ♀ Dacnis were supplanted, several times, by one or more of the ♀ Honeycreepers. Neither Dacnis offered the slightest resistance or displayed in any way when supplanted. This might suggest that the Honeycreeper is the dominant species — a point of some interest in connection with the integration of mixed flocks.

Both Dacnis began to keep up & down the trunks and branches of bushes almost as soon as they were put in the new cage. And then

Dunes, Apr 27, 1960, II.

(8)

I started to sweep along the sides & roof of the cage (there are a lot of dead leaves on top of the cage). Obviously looking for insects. It is now fairly obvious why the Darners are not as often associated with mixed flocks around BCI as one might expect. Their feeding habits are quite distinctive. They must compete very little with the other local birds, however.

The most interesting reactions of the A birds today in their new cage were several "greeting" warbling songs by the ♂. At least 3 times, the ♂ uttered a "greeting" song when he rejoined the ♀ after being separated from her (at least several yards away). All these songs were obviously variants of the warbling song I heard yesterday. The song I heard most clearly today was uttered by the ♂ when he landed beside the ♀ after being supplanted by a ♀ Honeycreeper. This song consisted of 3 identical or nearly identical phrases, rapidly repeated one right after the other. Might be transcribed as: "Isuh-tsit-tseewew. Isuh-tsit-tseewew. Isuh-tsit-tseewew." (The "ewew" of the "tseewew" notes was moderately long. Might be better transcribed as "wooooo", except that it had a definite ew sound.) The other songs were uttered when the ♂ joined the ♀ without having been involved in hostilities beforehand. All similar but probably not identical to the song transcribed immediately above. All the songs were moderately loud, definitely not "whisper" songs (see also today's notes on Honeycreepers).

As far as I could tell, these songs were not accompanied by any special ritualized postures or movements. And the ♀ made no apparent response of any sort.

Duncus, I

March 12, 1961

Bruce Colcord

The pair of birds died a long time ago. About a month ago, I got a pair of adult birds, ♂ & ♀, and an apparently juvenile male, in process of molting from juvenal to adult plumage. I think his molt may be delayed, because he has been in captivity for some time, and he must be at least fairly young). The adult ♂ escaped somehow, so I was left with the adult ♀ and the young ♂. I shall call these birds "B" ♀ and "B♂". I have kept them separate, one in each side of a large cage (inside the animal house), separated from one another by a partition. This morning I removed the partition, and let the 2 birds together for about an hour. Then separated them again.

When I first let the 2 birds together, they were very excited. Flying back and forth very rapidly. Uttering lots of single CN's. Lots of flinging movements. Lots of "Screy"? Lots of BW. Lots of "Rushing". Lots of St Portuca mulierum Bowring. Some fighting.

Both birds uttered lots of CN's as they flew around the cage. Sometimes repeated very rapidly, but never accelerated into a trill or rattle, or organized into any more complex vocalization. All these CN's seemed to be essentially "Isid"s. Quite loud & hard. Possibly sometimes a little like "Sheet." As far as I could tell, the individual CN's uttered during this encounter were essentially the same as those uttered by both birds earlier when they would about their cages when they were still separated. But neither bird ever uttered as many CN's as rapidly when alone. As far as I can tell, the CN's of ♀ and ♂ (both juvenile & adult) Blue Duncus are all the same in sound.

Some of the CN's were uttered during St Portuca mulierum Bowring

Quebec, May 12, 1961, II.

(10)

Others accompanied by Flushing but no other ritualized movements except wren. Still others not accompanied by any ritualized postures or movements.

The ♂ uttered long phrases very frequently whenever he came near to the ♀ or the ♀ came near to him. Extremely variable. Usually usually something like "Tsit tsit tseewoo tseewooo" or "Tsit tsit tseewooo wooooo". The first couple of notes of each phrase were probably probably only little modified CN's. (Perhaps not modified at all in some cases.) Sometimes a preliminary "Tsit" replaced by something more like "Isee" sometimes. I think one or both of the longer notes at the end of a phrase was "tsoooooo" instead of "tseewoo". Some of the "woo" sounds (including the "woo"s in "tseewoo"s) were quite harsh and hoarse-sounding. Sometimes the song phrases were uttered singly, sometimes repeated rapidly once or (?) twice. Partial repetitions and incomplete phrases were also very common. Most song phrases and partial song phrases "embedded" in a run of CN's.

The ♂ appeared to utter these songs when he was Bowing, when he was in an St Posture without Bowing, and when he was not in any ritualized posture. Usually accompanied by Flushing movements; but the ♂ performed Flushing movements almost continuously when he was singing as well as when he was screeching.

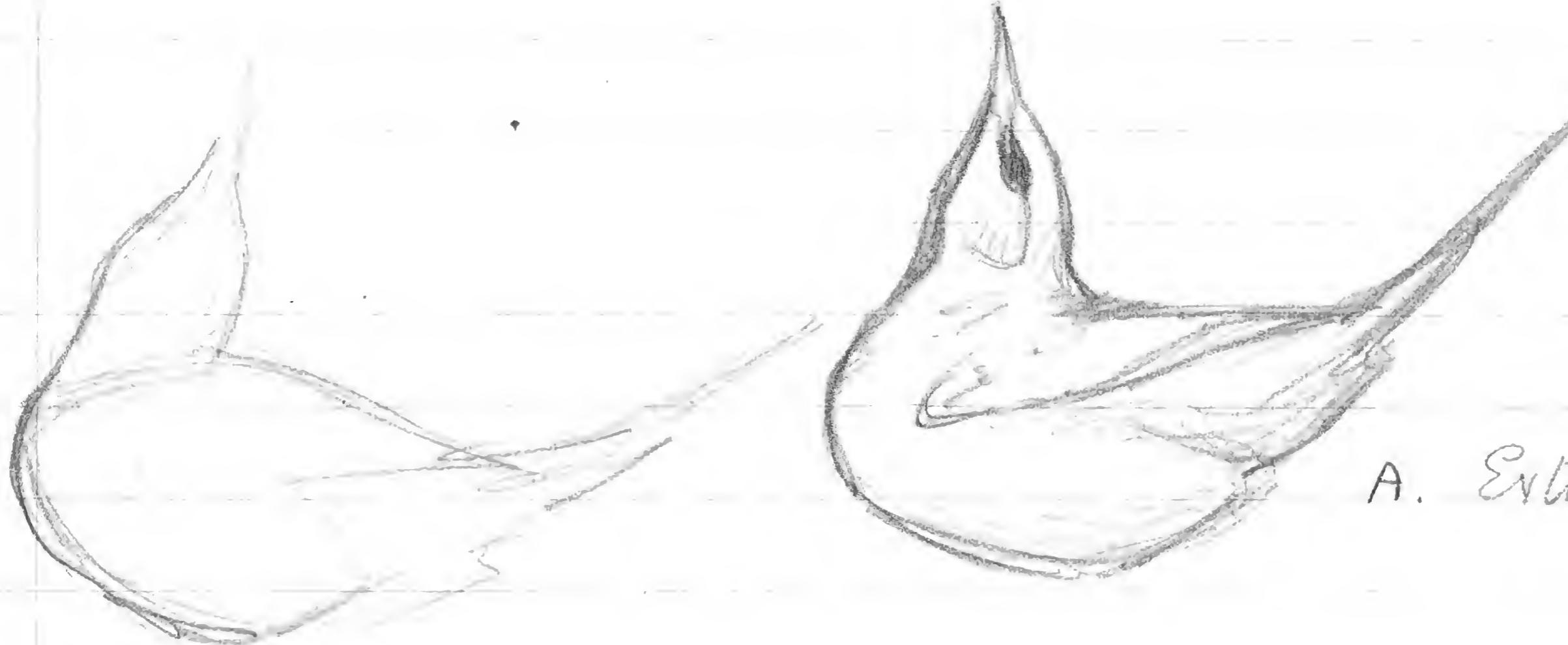
As far as I could tell, the ♀ uttered the same variety of long phrases, accompanied by the same variety of postural and movements, as the ♂ during this encounter this morning; but she certainly uttered song patterns much less frequently than the ♂.

(The BO used to utter song phrases quite frequently while he was by himself alone. But he has not done so for a couple of weeks. I think that the songs he uttered by himself alone were more or less similar to the ones he uttered during the encounter today, and they may not have

Dacus, Mar. 12, 1961, III

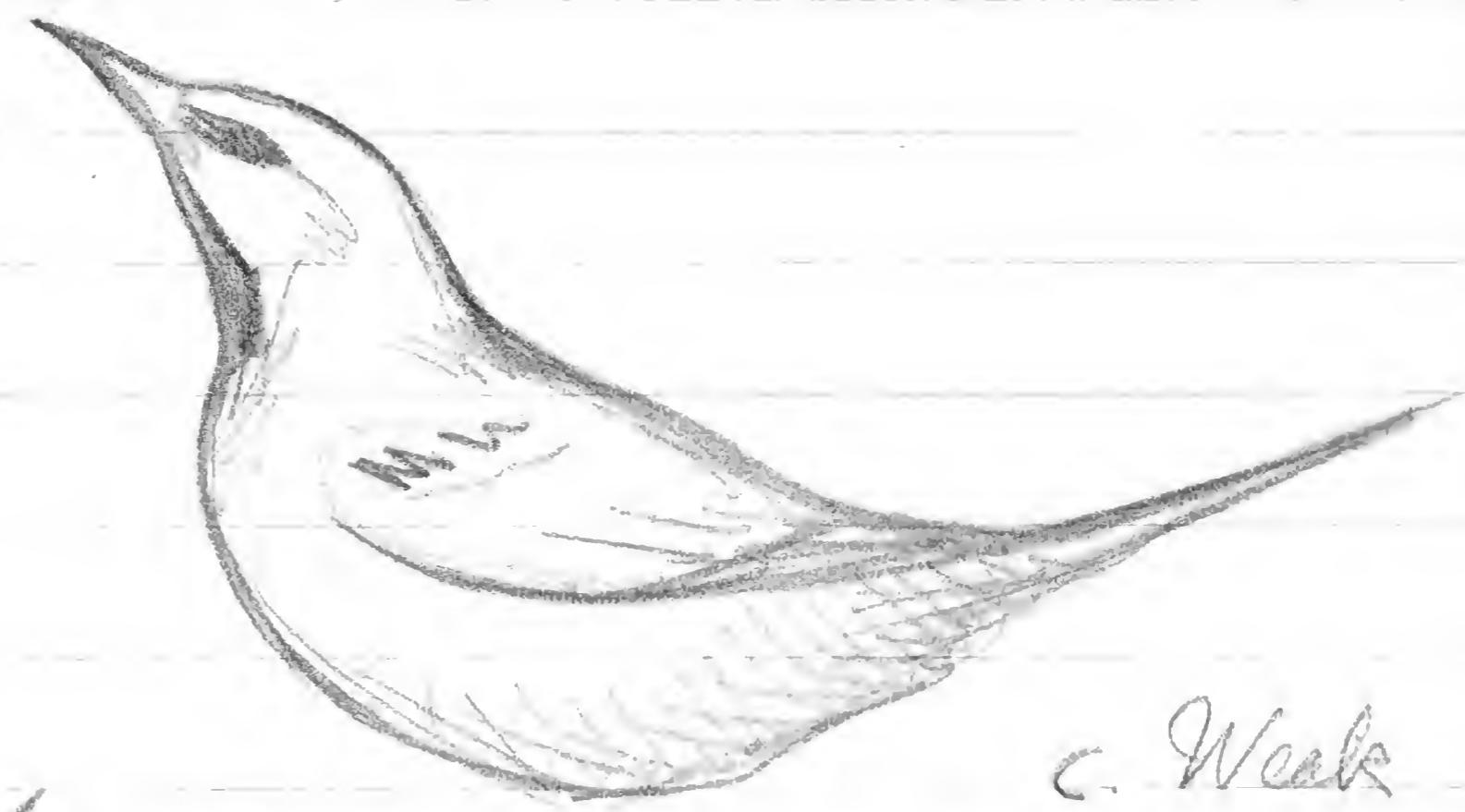
(11)

St. Postures I

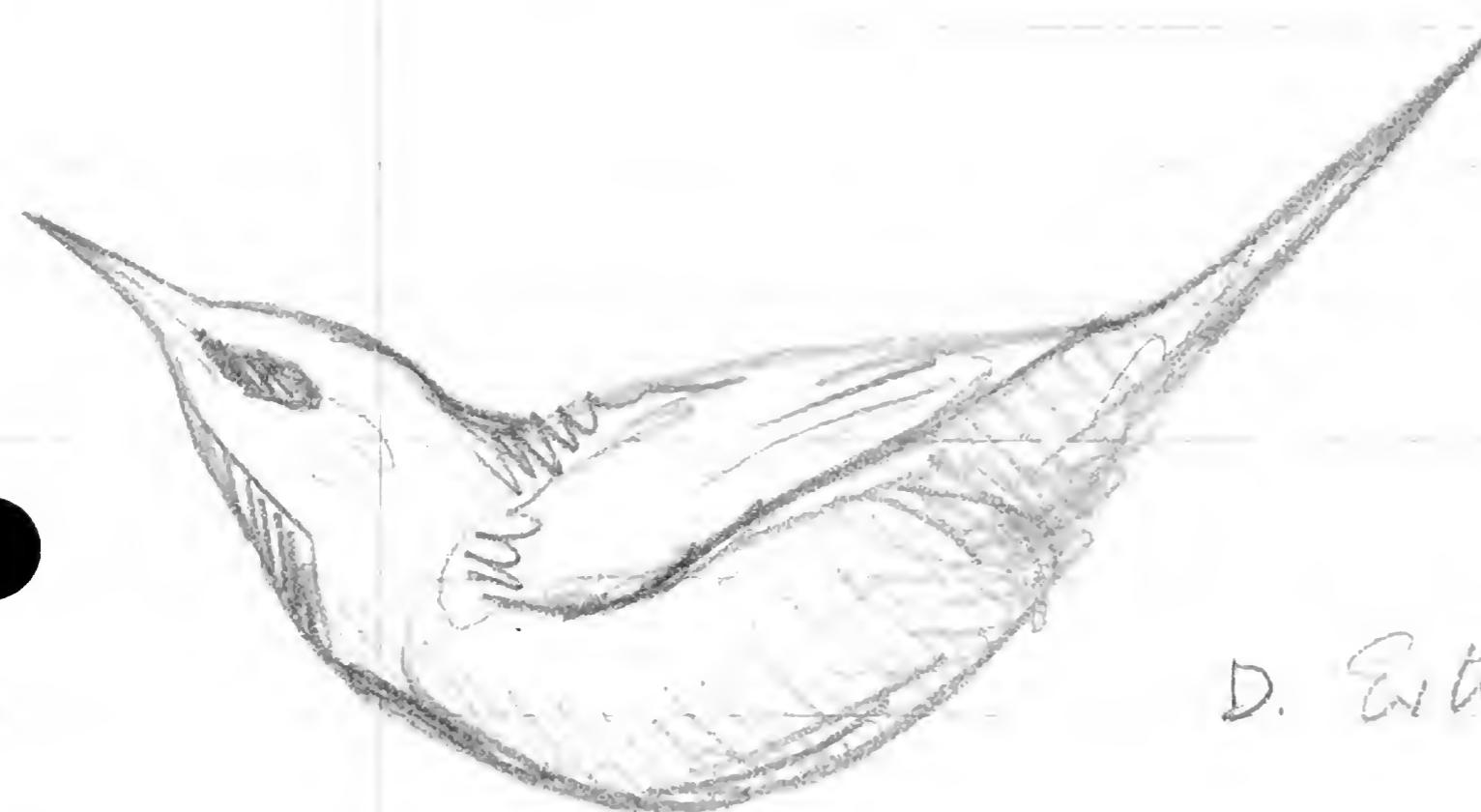


A. Extreme low

B. Extreme low



C. Weak



D. Extreme low forward

Dennis, Mar. 12, 1965, IV.

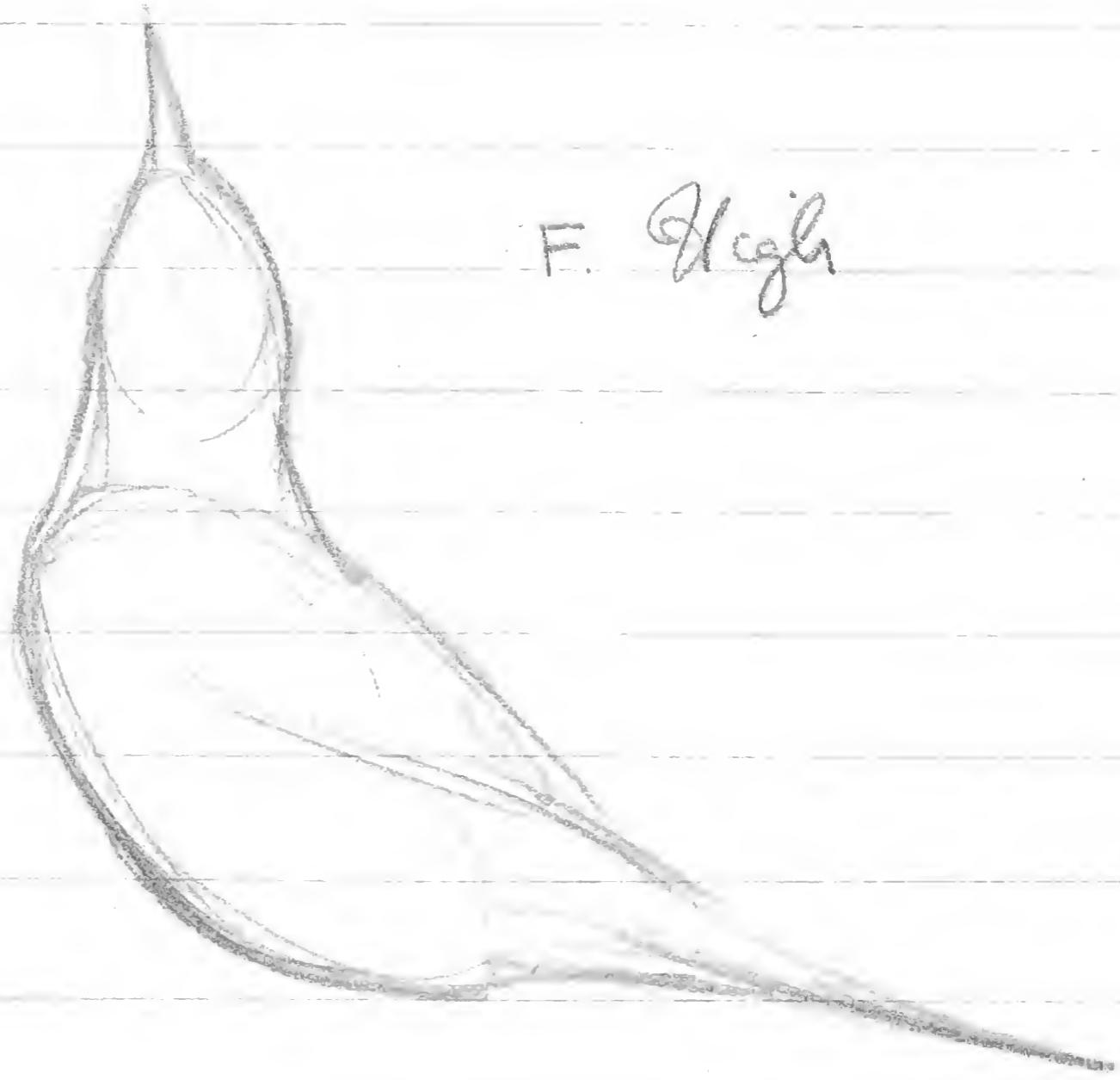
(12)

St. Postures II.

E. High +  
wing-droop



F. High



G. Diagonal



Dacnis, Mar. 12, 1961, F.

(13)

Low Bow Postures



H. Typical (?)



G. Less typical

been absolutely identical. The songs uttered by the ♂ when alone were uttered from apparently virtually identical sitting postures.)

The songs uttered by the ♂ & ♀ during this encounter today were obviously close, related to the "greeting" songs uttered by ♂ A described on April 27, 1960, p 3, above.

Both the ♂ B and the ♀ B did a lot of obviously highly ritualized Bowing this morning as soon as they came together. Reminiscent of the Bowing of the ♂ Red legged Blue Honeycreeper. Sometimes straight up and down. Alternation of St. Posture with "Low Bow" Posture.

All four, the ♂ B tended to alternate an extreme low St Posture (more or less like postures A. and B. drawn above on page 11) with the Low Bow Postures during his Bowing. This occurred most frequently just after

London, Mar. 12, 1961, 25.

(P)

If the ♂ and ♀ first came together, when they were most active. Such Low St Post was may be an indication of high intensity.

Later on, when the Cwids were less active, and the intensity of the encounter appeared to be declining, the ♂ assumed extreme Low St Post. This was relatively less frequently during his Bowing. Assumed Weak St. Post was (more or less like C. on p. 11) relatively more frequently during his Bowing.

The ♀ B did rather less extreme Bowing, and less Bowing in general, throughout this encounter. I don't know if she ever assumed a very extreme Low St Posture during her Bowing at any time. She did, however, frequently assume Weak St Postures during Bowing.

I think that the Bowing of both ♂ and ♀ B was usually accompanied by Song phrases; but I am not quite sure about this. Certainly, some times silent and/or accompanied by CN's instead of songs.

A lot of the Bowing of both ♂ and ♀ B was also combined with Pivoting. Quite extreme. Quite like the Pivoting of manibais. It was my impression that the ♂ tended to do a lot of straight up and down Bowing, with little or no Pivoting, during the very first few seconds after encountering the ♀ for the first time. But he began doing a lot of extreme Pivoting very soon afterwards, while the Cwids were still showing a lot of apparently high intensity behavior.

I think that most of the sideways movement during Pivoting during Bowing was on the downbeat. Or, at least, this is the impression I got. Is it possible?

I think that the ♀ tended to do rather less, and less extreme, Pivoting than the ♂ on the average.

Both birds did a lot of BWs during, especially, at first when they seemed to be most excited. It is possible that the downbeat

Dawes, Mar. 12, 1961, VII.

(15)

events during Bowing (especially Bowing + Pivoting) are intention movements of BW, or have been derived from intention movements of BW.

Tail-flashing was particularly conspicuous during some Pivoting. Sometimes, at least D-V, with an extreme horizontal component.

→ → A Eventually a continuation of the body movements

Both ♂ and ♀ B sometimes assumed St. Postures without any downward Bowing movements. Especially toward the end of the encounter this morning. Most of these St. is probably low intensity. Usually more or less Weak St. Postures (like C. on p. 11). Usually silent, I think.

Several times, when the ♀ came particularly close to the ♂, he assumed a very High St (like E or F on p. 12). Also silent. He ♂ was much more aggressive than the ♂ this morning; and it was my impression that these very high St's may have contained a relatively very strong escape component.

I think that the Diagonal St's (on p. 12), which were occasionally assumed by both ♂ and ♀, may be nothing more than variants of the ordinary Weak St (c. p. 11). But it was also my impression that the ♀ tended to assume such Diagonal St's relatively much more frequently than the ♂.

The ♀ actually attacked the ♂ at least 3 times this morning. But she did not continue to pursue the ♂ relentlessly after attacking, in the way that I have seen some ♀ Green Honeycreepers do. I think that all or most of her attacks upon the ♂ were immediately preceded by long glances by one or both birds.

It is obvious that all or almost all the display patterns of both ♂ and ♀ B this morning were largely or completely hostile.

Ruffling and fluffing patterns were not conspicuous during the

Dennis, March 12, 1961, 105

(16)

encounter between the B's this morning. Both birds tended to have the breast and belly feathers slightly moderately fluffed much of the time; but I was unable to determine if this fluffing was ritualized or not.

Every once in a while, one of the birds would ruffle or fluff the black back feathers a little. But again I was unable to determine if this was significant.

I was quite absent this morning. Only twice did the ♂ drop his wings appreciably. Both times in high st. Posture. The absence of ♂ in such situations is a remarkable difference from the behavior of Cyanocitta.

Dennis, I

March 13, 1961

Barno Colorado

I kept the B birds apart today, but watched them from time to time during the morning.

♂ B uttered one song this morning shortly after dawn, just after he woke up. In a perfectly unritualized sitting posture. This song was more or less like the songs I heard yesterday; except that it began with a long run of at least 8 rather CN-like notes. These CN-like notes appeared to be more or less definitely organized into doublets. More or less comme: "Zee-zee zee-zee zee-zee ..."

Then he sat in a very fluffed posture (see drawing on next page) and uttered lots of single ordinary-sounding CN's. "Tit... Tit... Tit... Tit..." Quite loud (probably slightly louder than all or most songs) and rapid. I noticed that the bill opened, widely, and closed with each note.

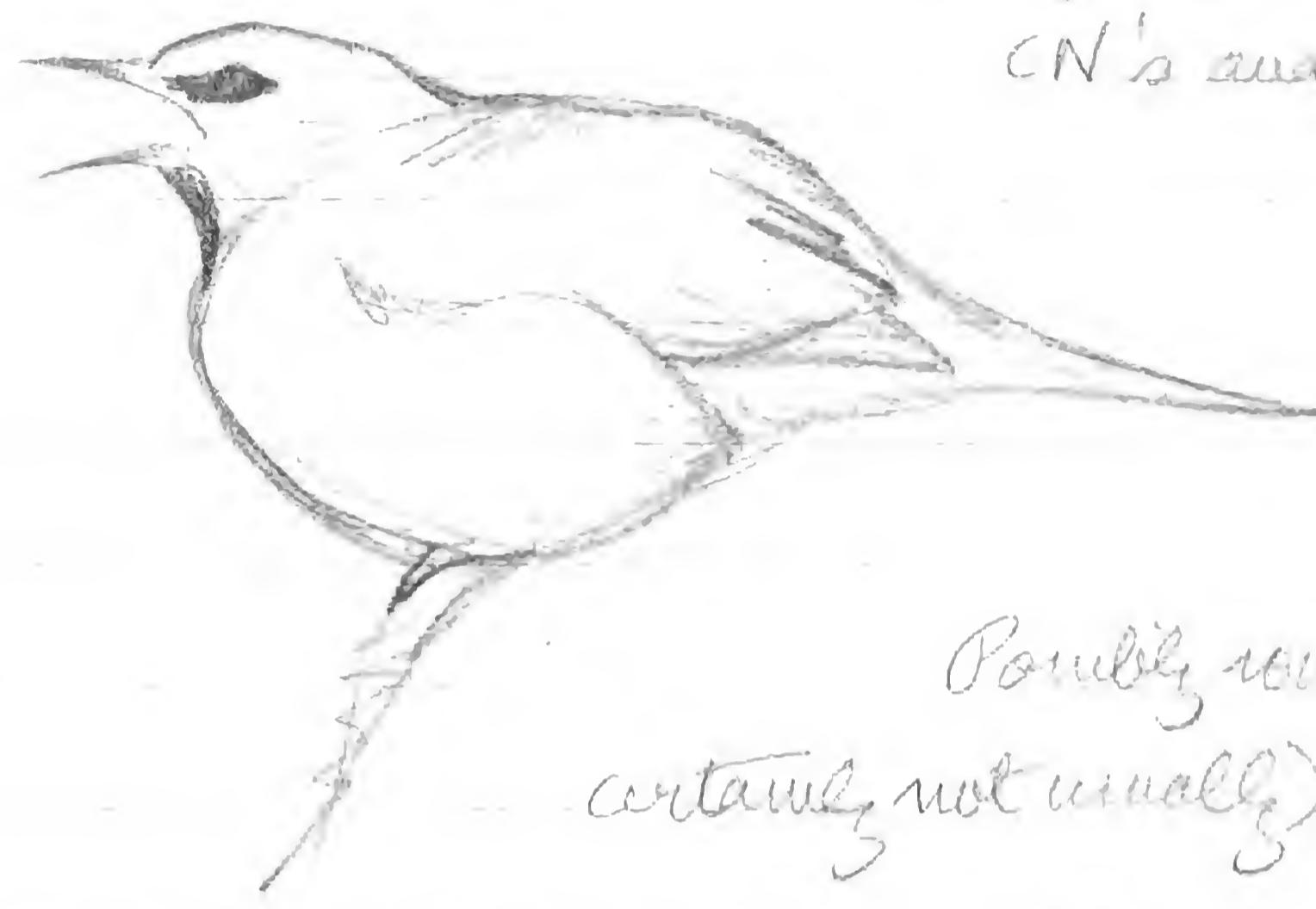
Then the ♂ uttered another song phrase, while he continued to sit in the same very fluffed posture. This phrase might possibly be transcri-

Dennis, Mar. 13, 1961, II.

(17)

led by repeating like "Int ta - sa ta - sa whooch whoo"

I fluffed posture accompanying  
CN's and song Phrases



Possibly sometimes (but almost  
certainly not usually) more diagonal.

Then he uttered several new song phrases. (Again included lots of "zee zee" notes)

I have now come to the conclusion that the basic form of all or most complete songs of this species is a series of CN-CN doubles followed by one or two hoarser & harsher "Whoooo" Notes.

It is easy to imagine how the CN & HCN patterns of the Red-Ceaged Blue Honeycreeper could have been derived from a song of this type.

Later this morning, around 10:00 a.m., I was surprised to hear the ♀ B uttering lots of song phrases all by herself (the ♂ was quiet throughout all the period the ♀ sang). She uttered these songs as she sat, and also while on the ground about her cage in a perfectly ordinary way. There was never any trace of any ritualized postures or movements (except occasional, not very extreme, fluffing) at any time during the period she sang. As far as I could tell her bill was kept completely closed throughout all her songs.

Her songs were extremely variable. Most of them varied between something like "Zee zee zee zee ta - whee - yoo ta - whee - yoo" and something like "Zee zee zee Whoooo". All her singing was really quite

Dec. 1, 1961 - 13, 1961, II

(18)

It was really reminiscent of Palm and Blue Tanagers!

Dawn, I.

March 23, 1961  
Barro Colorado

I let the B birds together again this evening, shortly before sunset. They reacted in much the same way as on March 12, but much less vigorously.

Both birds began Bowing, and uttering CN's and songs, immediately. But then they quieted down fairly rapidly.

Some of the songs were nothing more than "I sit to ooee" presumably a low-intensity but complete version of song. I don't know if there is any motivational or functional difference between songs ending in "I see tree" and songs ending in "I see weeo". Possibly the latter are more strongly hostile. "Woo" sounds sometimes have an HAC-like quality.

Most of the Bowing consisted of alternate postures come ga.  
Presumably moderately low intensity.



Some of the Bowing and songs were certainly completely synchronized.

There was one brief but vigorous contact fight, in the air, between the 2 birds shortly after they came together. Almost completely silent. No HAC. Only a few single, quite ordinary sounding CN's. This would indicate that some or all of the CN's are at least partly host-